

SECRET

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

[REDACTED]  
COPY 6 OF 6

6 AUG 1963

25X1

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Research)

SUBJECT : Discussion of M versus M-2

1. This memorandum contains information requested by the Deputy Director (Research).
2. As an introduction to the conflict between requirements and the state-of-the-art in satellite reconnaissance, a few general statements seem pertinent.

- A. An "ultimate" satellite system combines search with technical objective reconnaissance. A major technical breakthrough is required to give one foot ground resolution combined with wide area coverage considering payload weight limitations imposed by satellite boosters in the immediate future. New film types seem to offer the best possibility for achieving this goal. If the unconventional or non-silver halide films become available and the law of physics on silver emulsions (the finer the grain, the slower the film) is beaten, we should have our breakthrough.

For example, [REDACTED] is working on a sophisticated chemistry program with various dyes. In one area of work they have progressed from taking a picture in 30 seconds to taking a picture in 1/4 second in only six weeks. They hope to eventually achieve 1000 lines per millimeter at A.S.A. 100. If they achieve this goal we can use high shutter speeds and forget problems of yaw control, IMC and vibration. Such materials are not currently available but should be included in our long range plans.

[REDACTED]

NRO  
25X1

SECRET

[REDACTED]

25X1

Page 2

LANTARD, with  
66 inches of focal length is designed for an optimum

LANTARD covers about 40 nautical miles and carries  
8000 feet of film. Therefore,

the payload and coverage drop rapidly with  
increased focal length and large camera systems.  
In addition, precise programming and orbit are  
required to hit the assigned targets. This fact,  
coupled with the requirement for all subsystems  
(DCL, yaw programming, thermal control, etc.) to  
operate perfectly lead to doubts in the ability  
to achieve a highly reliable mission operation.

The certain degree of  
to date, certainly  
gives an excellent measure of the current capabilities  
and limitations.

- C. The Parcell Panel recommended that we improve MURAL  
to achieve the best resolution obtained on a continuous  
basis. This has been a continuing objective of the  
Configuration Control Board from the start of the  
basic CORONA program. (The CORONA, the CORONA-Prime,  
the MURAL and the "J"). While we have certainly had  
our disappointments and headaches, the general trend  
has been upward from the first successful mission.  
NPIC quotes CORONA as achieving 9 feet resolution 15%  
of the time. In considering all of the variables  
affecting quality, we must look at the particular  
camera quality, the sun angle, scene contrast, DCL,  
film flatness, temperature, pressure, altitude, exposure,  
yaw, roll, pitch, film type, processing, and weather.  
When all of these parameters to be considered zero out  
to 15% of the time, the system must be performing fairly  
close to optimum.

3. The CCB has approved installation of extra roller on the  
MURAL/J scan arm. This tests the film flatness to 0.001 of an inch.  
A new invar/titanium drum was installed for temperature control of the  
focal distance. (There are a few systems delivered without this new

SECRET



Page 3

25X1

arm that will be flown). Passive thermal control is under constant investigation. Improved IMC ramps are being incorporated and yaw control is under consideration. A simple, two slit, exposure control is also being investigated. There are only a few other items which might give a little improvement in the percentage of good quality. This is in the area of improved lenses (a development program), automatic exposure control (a new design with reliability doubts), and active thermal control (a design and development program). Generally speaking, however, we are very close to optimum and have been ahead of the design goal for MURAL/J.

4. In the area of auxiliary equipment, the GSB is keeping pressure on the contractors to improve performance of the following items:

- A. Binary recording of clock data.
- B. Horizon imagery which is consistently good and reliable.
- C. A reliable Stellar/Index Camera. The stellar exposures are now very good with baffle operation satisfactory for solar and earth flares. An improved shutter is now being installed on the index camera which should increase reliability.

5. It seems reasonable to conclude that to improve MURAL to the point where the best resolution is obtained continuously, we should improve the scale. Therefore, M-2 appears to be the most logical approach. This proposal is for a scale up of the existing system from a 24-inch to a 40-inch lens. This camera subsystem would retain the Petzval lens design at an  $f/3.5$ , reduce the scan angle from  $70^\circ$  to  $60^\circ$  ( swath width from 140 to 115 nautical miles), use 5 inch film and retain much of the basic proven MURAL design. This system would require TAT and probably cannot fit into the double (J) configuration. This system would require about 18 months to develop. The design objective is to acquire about 5 feet of ground resolution. It would be highly desirable to at least pursue M-2 as a development program and place this capability on the shelf. Itak has already expended some limited funds on a tentative go-ahead and a wooden mock up of the camera is nearly completed.

(Signed) Jack C. Ledford

JACK C. LEDFORD  
COLONEL, USAF  
Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

DD/OSA: (5 August 63)

Distribution:

Cy 1 - DD/R

2 - AD/OSA

2 - D/ORTH/OSA

4 - DD/OSA

5 - DD/OSA (chrono)

6 - RB/OSA

SECRET

25X1

25X1